



**NEWSLETTER OF THE LONDON CHAPTER,
ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

*c/o Museum of Ontario Archaeology
1600 Attawandaron Road, London, ON N6G 3M6*



April, Sept. to Nov. 2012

12-4 to 12-7

The next meeting of the London Chapter will be held on Thursday October 10, 2013. The speaker will be Dana Poulton of D. R. Poulton & Associates. His talk is entitled: *The 2008 Stage 2-4 Archaeological Investigations of the Sharp Site, a ca. 1800-1919 A.D. Homestead in Ancaster, Ontario*. Although the site is primarily a long term Euro-Canadian homestead, it also contains a small but interesting Late Woodland occupation.

The **November 14th** speaker will be **Dr. Dana Millson**, who will speak about her doctoral work on British Neolithic and Early Bronze Age pottery carried out at Durham University, UK. Exact title will be announced shortly.

Speaker's Night is held the 2nd Thursday of each month (January to April and September to December) at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, 1600 Attawandaron Road, near the corner of Wonderland & Fanshawe Park Road, in the northwest part of the city. The meeting starts at 8:00 pm. Doors open at 7:30 PM and as usual there will be free juice and cookies!

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Late Woodland Settlement on the Periphery: Another Part of the Big Picture

by David Riddell

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2008, D. M. Gibbs Consulting was contracted by B. F. Environmental Ltd. to undertake Stage 3 and 4 excavations on an approximately 2 ha property near Port Lambton, Ontario (Figure 1). Stage 3 activities were completed in June 2008 while Stage 4 excavations were concluded in July 2008. Several areas of settlement, referred to below as the Frye sites, were delineated along a subtle sand ridge adjacent to Marshy Creek, a tributary of the *Chenal Ecarte* and Sydenham River (Figure 2). Stage 3 activities identified four sparse but distinct artifact clusters, each consisting of fragments of fire-cracked rock, bone, lithics, and ceramics, with Locations 2 and 3, and Location 4 to a lesser extent, comparable in surface artifact density and site area. Artifact distribution at Location 1, by contrast, covered a greater surface area. As a whole, the styles of artifacts recovered, particularly the ceramic assemblages, suggest the sites were occupied on and off between the tenth to fifteenth centuries A.D. during the Late Woodland period.

The Stage 4 excavations revealed the presence of structures at all four locations including forms that have not been previously or rarely reported for Western Basin Late Woodland groups in the area. Hence, the site locations expand our knowledge of the range of Late Woodland structures and more broadly, site types, in the area. While the structures at Locations 2, 3, and 4 are strikingly similar to each other, the subtle differences described below are used to suggest somewhat differing functions/uses of the four locations.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The subject property lies on the periphery of the Sydenham River delta, adjacent to Marshy Creek and in close proximity to the *Chenal Ecarte* which separates Walpole Island from the St. Clair River. The major boundary here, of course, is the latter river, but also the *Chenal Ecarte*, and in a more immediate sense still, Marshy Creek which may have been a more substantial watercourse during the Late Woodland period than it is today (Figure 3).

The soils surrounding the outwash plain of the Sydenham and *Chenal* are generally a heavy clay base overlain by deposits of sand and silt. One of these deposits runs parallel to Marshy Creek, where the four sites are located, and would have effectively formed a “bridge” between the swampy lowlands of the St. Clair, *Chenal Ecarte*, and Sydenham Rivers. The historic vegetation records indicate a predominately oak–savannah biome, which is in evidence today on adjacent Walpole Island. This “sub” biome, if you will, was a limited and unique ecosystem during the period in question, as it is today (it is much more limited now, of course) and would have offered a slightly differing resource selection within the Carolinian forest biome.

What is in evidence then within the study area is a slightly elevated sandy corridor traversing a marshy zone, beginning in the area of the Frye sites and continuing east toward the Sydenham River (the apex of the north and east branches), skirting Walpole Island in the process. Within

this context, we find the four small Late Woodland encampments situated along the western-most section of the ridge.

CULTURAL SETTING

Late Woodland settlement in the surrounding area includes the Highbanks Beach site on Walpole Island, located across the *Chenal Ecarte* from the Frye Sites, as well as other sites documented as part of the Walpole Island Archaeological Master Plan (see Adams 1989). There are also collections of Late Woodland artifacts at the Walpole Island First Nations Heritage Centre, in addition to area lithics (e.g., Port Lambton) spanning all time periods.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Location 1

Introduction

This settlement consists of a dense cluster of 37 features bounded by a single row of, at times, paired post molds in an open-ended, circular arrangement (Figure 4). The structure resembles a horseshoe approximately 10 m in circumference with the open end facing northwest. Six features flank the perimeter of the structure (numbers 1, 2, and 6 lie just outside the house wall while numbers 33, 32, 29, and 26 abut the wall of the structure in the interior), and there are several centrally located interior post molds (but none that could be regarded as support posts). Post molds average 8 cm in diameter and 8 cm in depth.

Feature Characteristics and Affiliation

Of the 37 features identified, 14 would appear to date to the Younge phase (ca. A.D. 900-1200) based on ceramic characteristics (e.g., cord-marked / roughened surface treatments and generally a lack of horizontal motifs and well developed collars; see Figure 5 a-c) and the presence of a triangular Levanna projectile point. At least two of these features may also date to the Springwells phase (ca. A.D. 1200-1400) given the presence of several smoothed / slip-roughened necksherds and bodysherds as well as rimsherd fragments with horizontal lines (see Figure 5 d-f).

The features at this settlement are strikingly similar despite what would appear to be a multi-generational period of occupation. Most features are invariably shallow, averaging 21 cm in depth for the Younge phase occupation and 18 cm in depth during Springwells phase times. Feature circumference is likewise comparable with features in the earlier occupation averaging a little over 1 m while those in the later component average 87 cm. The soil matrix within the features is also uniform with no stratification present. There is, however, some overlap of features (i.e., Features 16 / 17, 33 / 34, and 36 / 37) with later Springwells pits somewhat superimposed over earlier Younge phase examples. There was no obvious hearth present within this structure, however Feature 21 contained a small pocket of fired soil which may pertain to a remnant hearth.

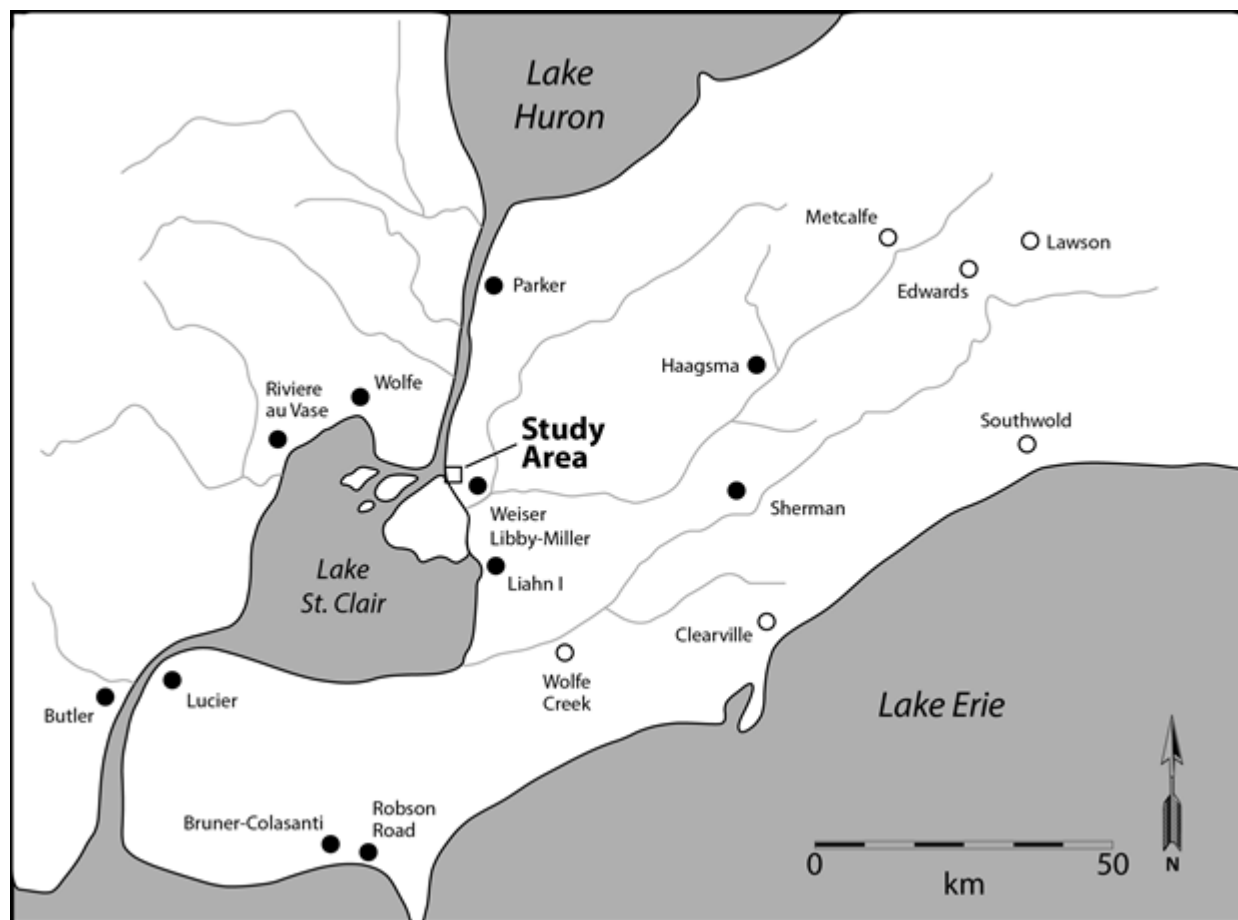


Figure 1: Location of the Study Area and Select Late Woodland Sites in Southwestern Ontario and Southeastern Michigan. Open circles indicate Iroquoian settlements while black circles denote Western Basin Tradition sites.

What is striking about the Location 1 features, in addition to their uniform size and depth, is the paucity of contents. Given the size of the pits, only meagre samples of ceramic, lithic, and bone were recovered from Features 1, 2, 11, 13, 15 through 19, 21, 27, 28, 30, 34, and 36. These features pertain to both the earlier and later occupations suggesting a similar use from one period to the next. Few diagnostic ceramics were found from the Younger and Springwells components, and only one Levanna projectile point was found as noted above. There were also scant faunal remains (generally of deer), including burnt/calced fragments, however, the presence of a canid mandible in Feature 17 is intriguing. The small lithic tally consists mainly of secondary thinning flakes, invariably on Kettle Point chert. There was, therefore, little in the way of tool working and little butchering or consumption on site. Indeed, only two formal scraping tools were identified. Additionally, there would appear to be little evidence of plant use although a full floral analysis is pending. Features with no contents recovered include numbers 4, 8, 9, 10, 14, 22 through 26, 29, and 32.

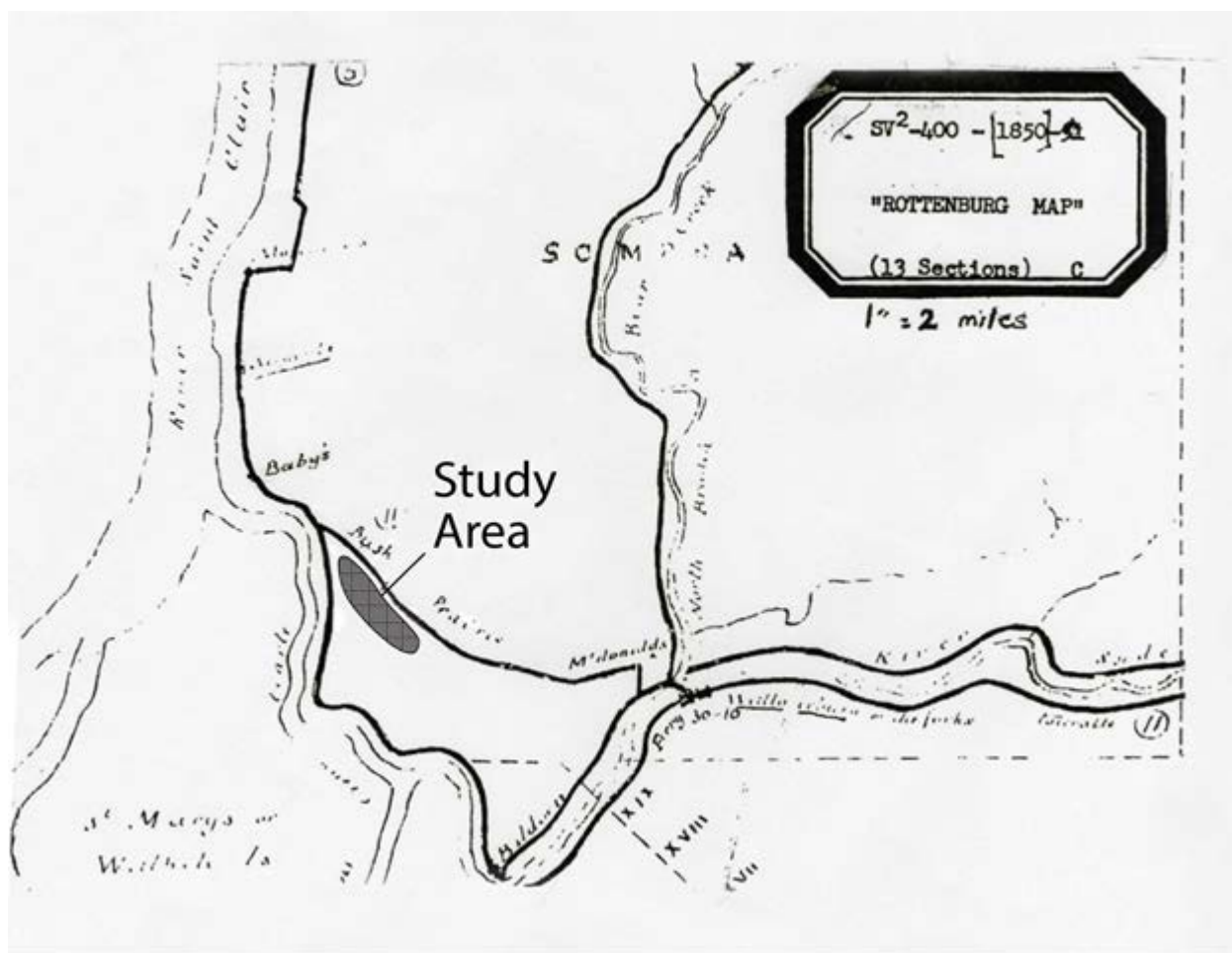


Figure 2: A Portion of the 1850 Rottenburg Map with Study Area Indicated.

Location 1 Discussion

The nature of the Location 1 settlement is intriguing. The shallow depth of the features, dearth of feature contents, and lack of a definite hearth argue for very short term occupations. Yet the encampments were extensive enough, at least during the initial Younge phase occupation, to warrant a large and perhaps semi-enclosed shelter, and the excavation of sizeable but shallow pit features. It is also intriguing that the site chosen for the encampment was important enough to merit two separate occupations within the same structure, even though the site may have reverted back to its natural state between visits. This leads one to speculate on the function of such a shelter. A plausible explanation is that, as an occupation situated in proximity to the St. Clair / *Chenal Ecarte* waterways, it functioned as a temporary stopover during transport and trade. Its location along a slight sandy ridge bordering Marshy Creek would, in combination with the other settlements along this ridge, make it part of a well-used trail that perhaps served as a shortcut to other inland routes.

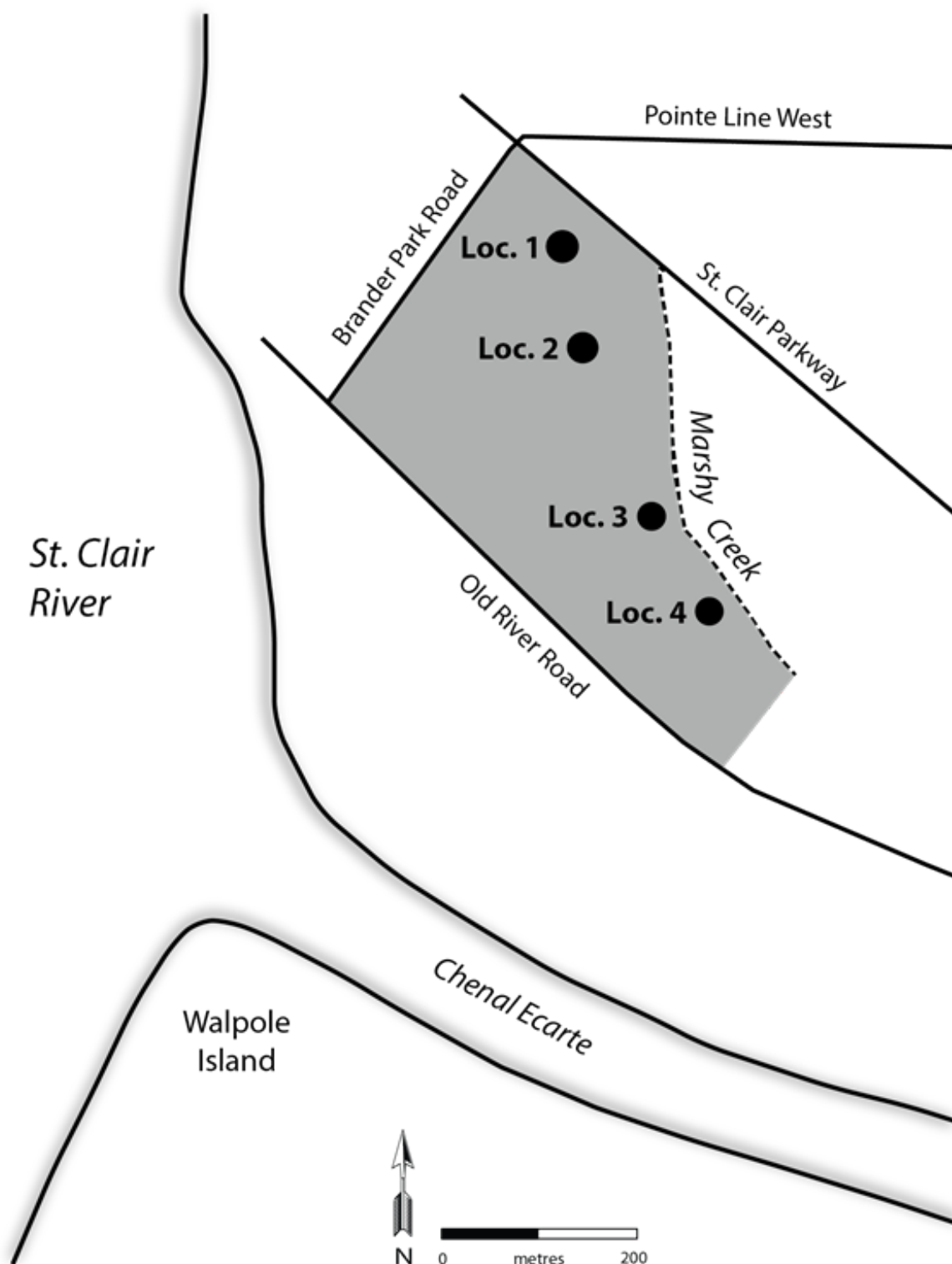


Figure 3: Subject Property with Site Locations.

It may also be, however, that the initial intended use of the structure was that of a deer surround — a palisade-like enclosure at the end of a cone-shaped deer drive; in other words, a giant trap for deer to be slain once inside. This was the proposed function of the Early Ontario Iroquoian Little

site (Williamson 1990). However, the evidence there was more compelling due to a large feature containing the complete skeleton of a dog overlying a significant quantity of deer remains. Over time the enclosure may have taken on attributes of dwelling such as feature placements towards

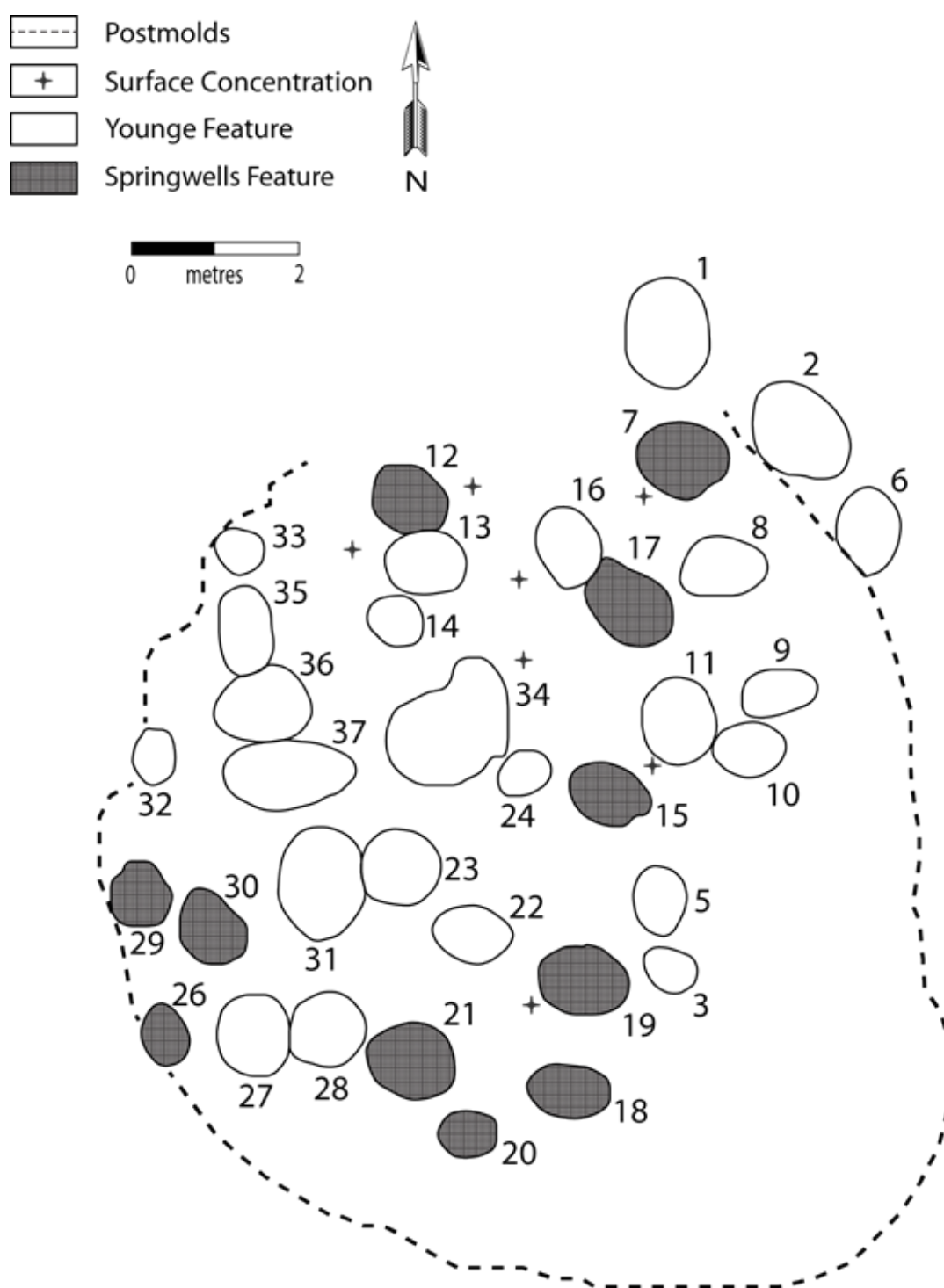


Figure 4: Location 1 Settlement Pattern.

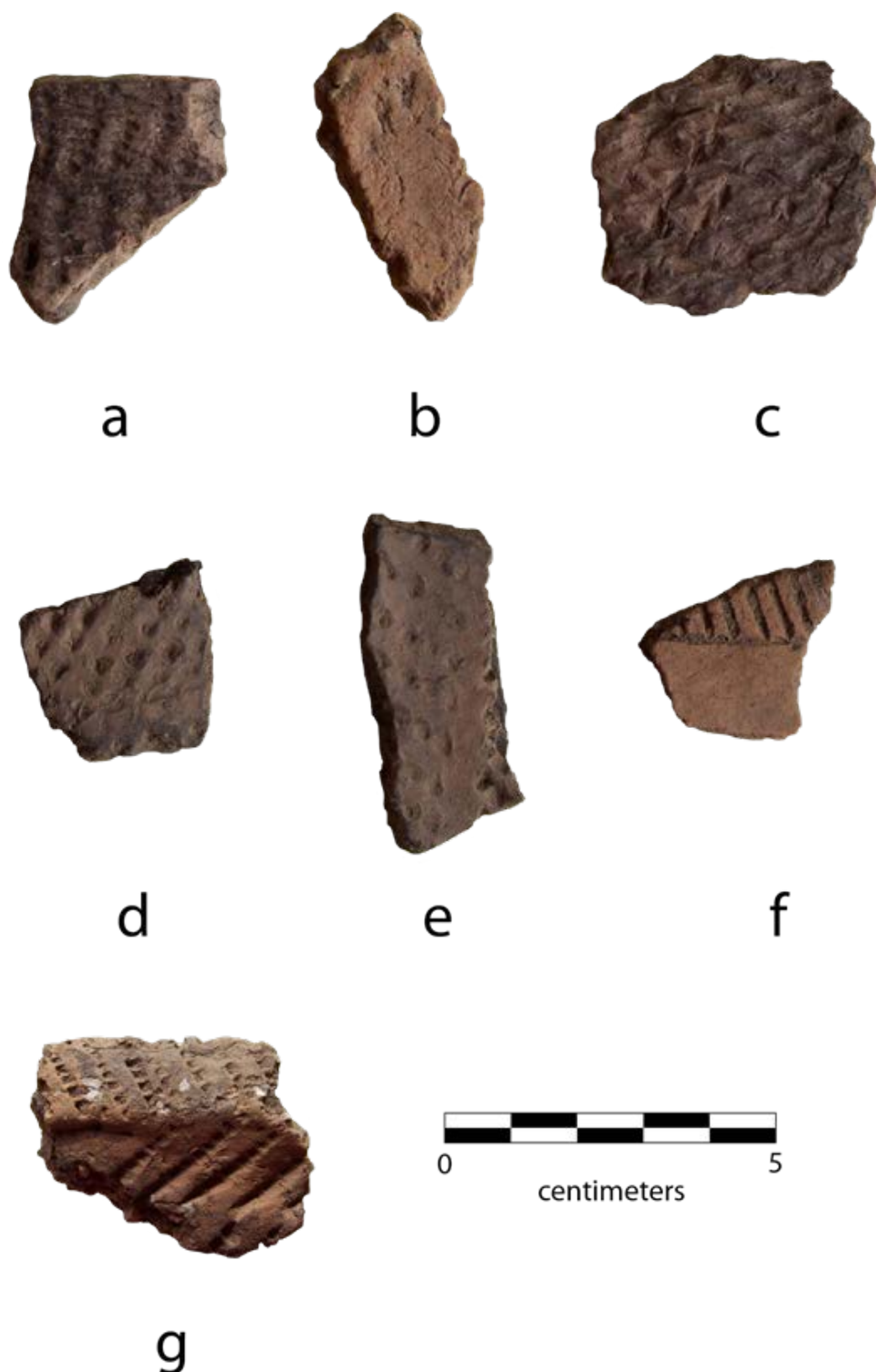


Figure 5: Ceramic Sherds from Location 1, Feature 1 (a-c), Location 1 Feature 18 (d-f), and Location 2 Feature 16 (g)

the walls. With little evidence of sustained hearth activity, and the large open end facing north/north-west, it certainly was not intended as a cold-weather habitation. Additionally, the modest post mold size and depth would tend to indicate an open type of enclosure rather than a

domed dwelling, as a structure with such an expanse (10 m) would require more substantial wall posts and interior supports which are non-existent in this case. In any event, the Younger phase occupation was certainly more substantial than the later Springwells occupation, although the ceramic sample would tend to argue for a site at the interface between the two phases. This is based on the fact that the cord-marking treatment appears to undergo a change over time; very finely cord-marked sherds, for example, were discovered in the same context as Springwells phase plain/wiped and slip-roughened sherds at the Haagsma Site (see Riddell 2006).

While not ruling out some type of ceremonial function for this location, and there may well have been other, less intensively occupied encampments (i.e., a day encampment leaving virtually nothing behind), the lack of fire pits and pipes would tend to suggest otherwise. We might ask, however, if there is something about this particular site that might warrant the number, type, and distribution of the observed remains. If we are simply looking at a temporary stopover, then the contents and nature of the features may be reflective of this type of settlement. For example, the small faunal sample, with only a few fragments of primarily deer long bone sections within the features, would seem to bear this out. Little calcined material was present as well. Reinforcing this interpretation is a paucity of lithic material and a rather limited ceramic sample.

On the other hand, we might well ask why a group would go to the trouble of erecting such a substantial structure if such were the case. Why bother to make such a dwelling if the size of the group(s) present would not warrant such an investment? As well, this is not what would be regarded as either a characteristic summer or winter habitation format. Again, perhaps it is the nature of the region – specifically, the presence of physical boundaries and travel/trade corridors. This particular place may have been seen as an appropriate meeting site to accommodate the concerns of a number of different groups intersecting each other's territories, resulting in an "uncharacteristic" structure reflecting the multiethnic nature of the region. Similarly, the impermanence of the occupation may reflect the transitory, ever-changing nature of the "fringes" of territory – and the carrier of culture and trade, the St. Clair River.

It is possible that the structure was modified into a smaller space over time, where essentially the central and western half of the "horseshoe" may have been enclosed, and where the bulk of the Springwells features lay. Indeed, the artifacts are somewhat more varied during this occupation, perhaps suggesting a subsistence orientation for the site. In either case, few ceramic artifacts diagnostic of time period (e.g., rimsherds) were identified, and those ceramics found in several of the features could be associated with either the Younger or Springwells occupations. In this light, certain features in themselves deserve mention. Feature 6, for example, which lies just outside the east wall, contained only bodysherds, relatively finely cord-marked, and likely of the same vessel. Feature 7, which lies just inside the east wall, contained the fragmented long bone sections of a large bird, likely a goose or turkey, and a very chalky limestone-like rock about the size and shape of small mammal skull. In addition, a piece of a red sandstone slab was also recovered. These types of stone were found together in a Springwells phase feature at the Haagsma Site, which I believe to be significant, and perhaps served as a source of pigment (Riddell 2006). As noted above, a canid mandible was recovered from Feature 17 nearby, and

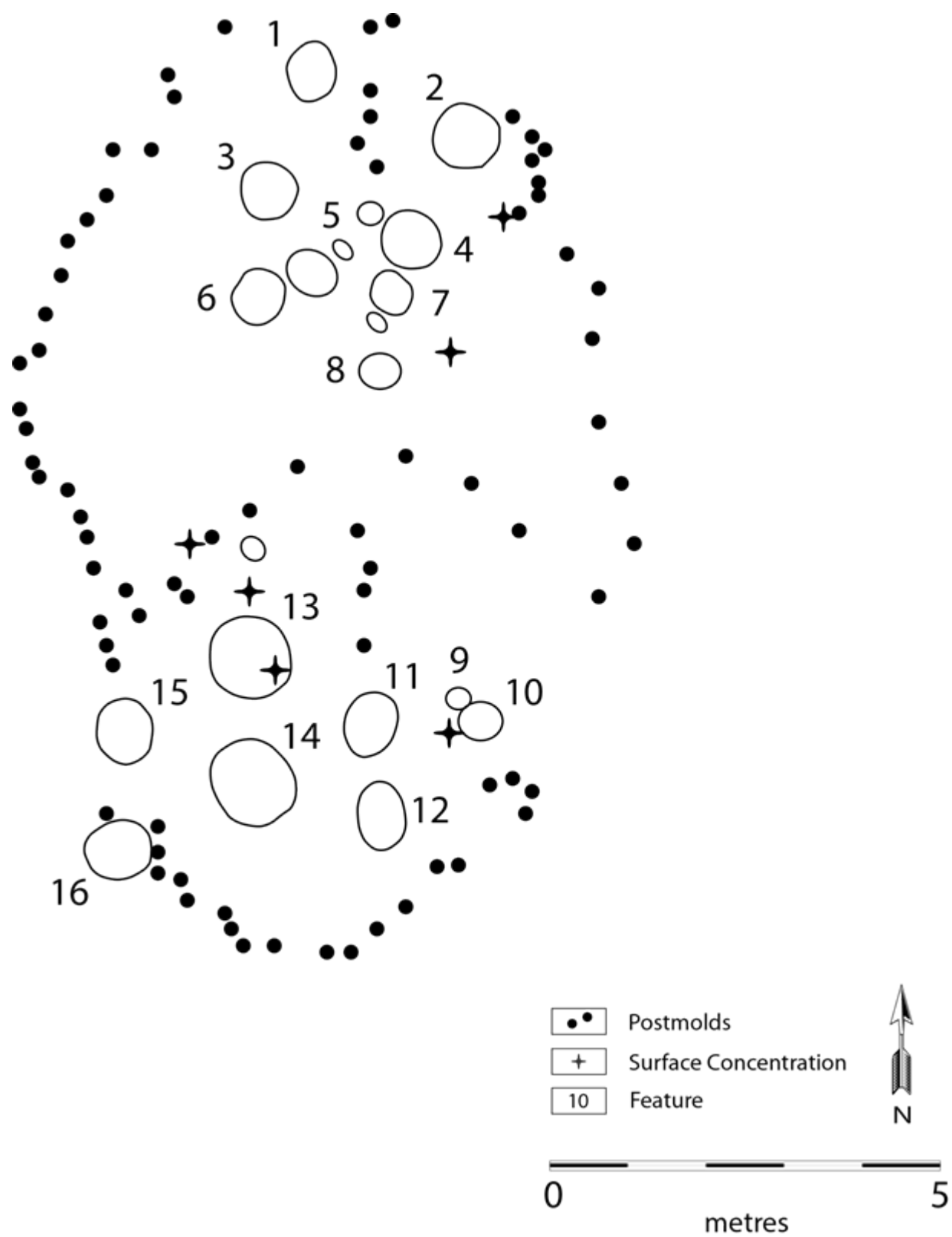


Figure 6: Location 2 Settlement Pattern.

small mammal fragments (unidentifiable) were found in Features 15 and 18 while a small amount of fish bone was retrieved from Feature 12. With the exception of Feature 6, these pits were associated with the Springwells phase, again pointing to a somewhat different role for this occupation than that of the earlier Younge phase encampment.

Location 2

Introduction

This settlement consists of what would appear to be two separate clusters of eight features. These two clusters in turn appear to be encircled by two separate, albeit overlapping, structures consisting of a single row each of post molds (see Figures 6 and 7). The larger of these structures (A) is circular, approximately 8 m in diameter, with features oriented toward the north end. Like Location 1, this structure also has fewer and more dispersed post molds on its east and overlapping south sides, however the overall orientation is north/northeast. The smaller structure (B) measures approximately 5 m in diameter, again with fewer post molds on the east side and north (overlapping) end. All post molds are less than 10 cm in diameter. The features, meanwhile, are evenly distributed within this structure.

There appear to be several possible openings in each structure. Concerning structure A, there are two or three openings on the north end near Features 1 and 2. In between these features is what appears to be an interior wall, or at least several post molds running in a north-south direction. In structure B, meanwhile, there appears once again to have been an opening or openings in the north end where, as with structure A, there may have been an interior partition consisting of several posts running in a north-south direction. Additionally, there are openings in the east and west sides / ends, again in proximity to two or three features.

The north wall curve of this structure is intrusive upon the south side / end of structure A; that is, it would seem that the south wall posts of structure A were removed by those who built structure B, which overlaps with structure A. The configuration / evolution of structures A and B is illustrated in Figure 7 where the dwellings are separated in order to better illustrate the arrangements of each. Postmold diameters of the structure(s) average 7 cm with depths averaging 6 cm.

Feature Characteristics and Affiliation

Of the 16 features identified, two contain ceramics characteristic of the Springwells timeframe (i.e., Features 2 and 16), including a rimsherd from Feature 16 (Figure 5g) which displays a well-developed collar and fine dentate stamping. A slip-roughened bodysherd was recovered from Feature 2.

Of the remaining features, five would appear to date to the Younge phase based on the presence of cord marked / cord-roughened / fabric impressed bodysherds. Some of these ceramic bodysherds, however, display a very dense / finely impressed surface treatment technique, which as stated, I believe, carries over into Springwells (and which is in evidence at the Haagsma and Cemetery sites; see Riddell 1993, 2006). Feature morphology and contents resemble that of

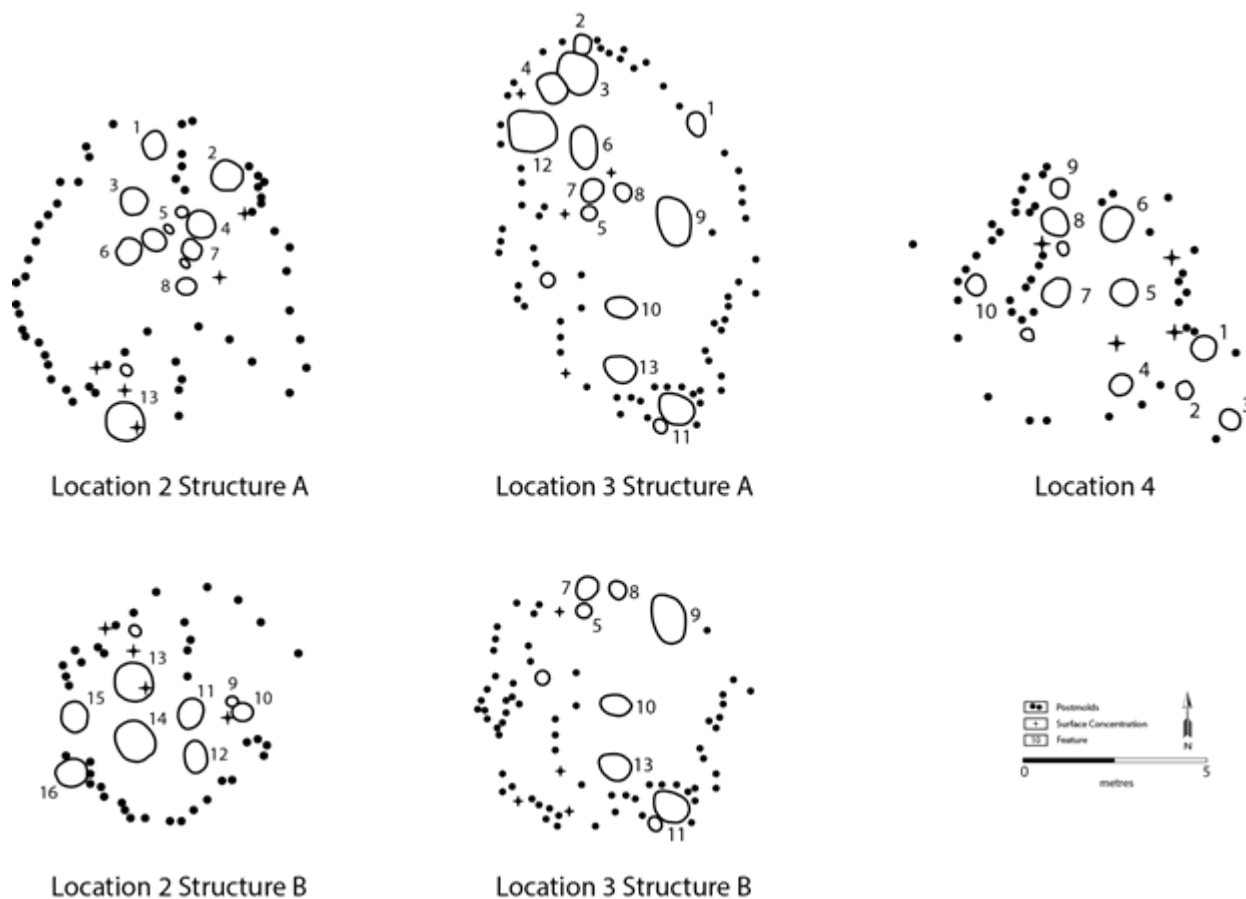


Figure 7: Structures A and B at Locations 2 and 3. Location 4 is included to show its resemblance to Structure B at Location 3.

Location 1 where shallow depths and wide diameters predominate, although those of structure A are smaller and have fewer contents still. The average feature diameter in structure A is 48 cm while the average depth is 8 cm. In structure B, the average diameter is 75 cm while the average depth is 17 cm.

In terms of artifacts, lithics, ceramics, and faunal remains are few in both structures with ceramics comprising the majority of the assemblage. Within Feature 11 (structure B), and to a lesser extent Features 12 and 13, are found the majority of artifacts. Feature 11 in particular contains the most intriguing artifacts, including several sections of a turtle carapace and a quantity of calcined bone. Aside from turtle shell, the other identifiable species is deer, represented by several fragments. Perhaps the most interesting of all, however, is a section of granitic rock with a pictograph depicting a deer or possibly an underwater panther¹ (Figure 8). Features without contents include numbers 3, 6 through 10, and 15, or nearly half the total number identified.



Figure 8: Pictograph Stone from Location 2.

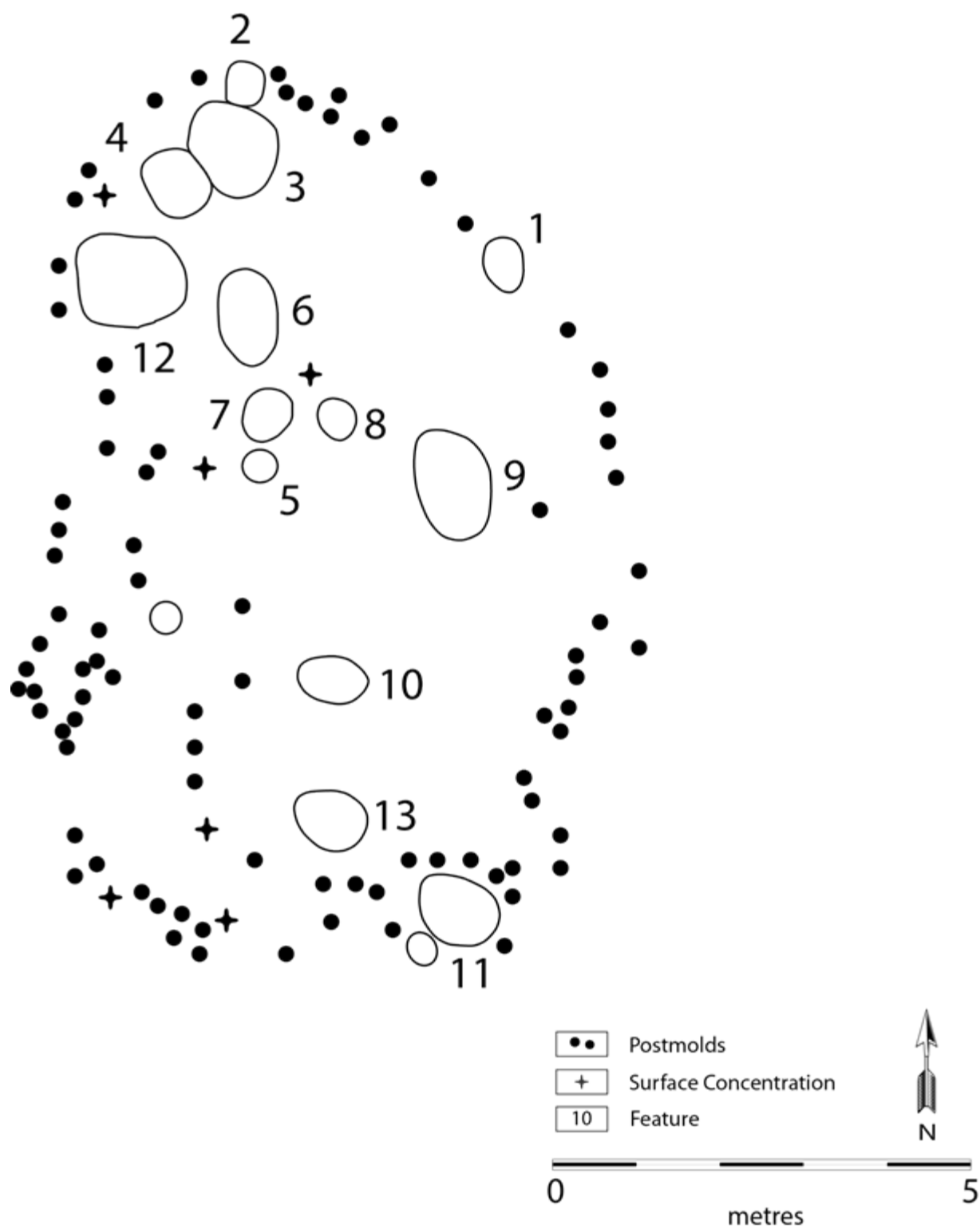


Figure 9: Location 3 Settlement Pattern.

Discussion: Location 2

Like Location 1, the nature of this encampment would appear to entail short-term and possibly single use occupations. Again, since no hearth was detected (other than remnants of fired soil in Feature 8), we can assume warm weather habitations with the smaller structure B likely occupied after the abandonment of structure A (based on the ceramic characteristics as noted above). In both dwellings, we can see symmetry in feature arrangement with four features oriented along the overall north/northeast axis of the structure straddling a likely entranceway and the apparent interior partition. In structure B, we can again see an equidistant alignment of the four main features of the dwelling space. The sparse artifact tally of the features, particularly in structure A, belies the temporary nature of these dwellings.



Figure 10: Profile of Feature 12, Location 3.

With regard to the openings of the structures, and keeping in mind the feature symmetry, it would appear that each group (“line”) of features in structure A was aligned with its own opening/entranceway, again with the partition wall located between the two. Perhaps this wall also served to divide the group, both materially and socially, within the house (e.g., the extended family or kin/clan). Indeed, we can see this arrangement repeated in structure B where the

interior partition lies between the two main groups of features, and, if extrapolated, would link up with that of structure A. However, in structure B, we can also see that the features appear as more of a whole, since the partition actually stops before reaching the features. Since this is also a smaller dwelling than structure A, could it be that the two possible entities in that dwelling merged into one to create a singular group in the new habitation?

It should be noted that although the majority of bodysherds on this site (in either dwelling) could be classified as cord-marked/roughened, all have been heavily wiped, almost to the point of obscuring the treatment completely. And again, the cord-marking is of a fine, tight pattern, particularly on those sherds found in structure B features and especially Feature 11. Together, these attributes tend to suggest a timeframe later than the Younge phase which is supported by the presence of a Springwells rimsherd in Feature 16 as noted above. Again, like the Springwells designations in Location 1, we may be glimpsing a transitional period here, perhaps around A.D. 1200 or slightly later, when cord-marking is still applied to vessels but is gradually being phased out in favour of plain, slip roughened, and ribbed-paddle treatments.

Just as experimentation in ceramic design may be occurring at this time, so too would a change appear to be taking place in dwelling form (i.e., the “morphing” of structure A into B) which seems also to be the case on certain contemporary sites in the London area (see e.g., Williamson 1990). There may, however, be a possibility that structures A and B were co-existent which would provide for an intriguing dwelling indeed. Given the feature and post mold patterning, however, as well as the artifact deposits noted, it seems likely that structure B was created (at least partially) from the posts of structure A.

Location 3

Introduction

Strikingly similar to the Location 2 structure in overall dimensions and morphology, the dwelling at Location 3 consists of an array of features (14 in total) bounded in places by a widely spaced pattern of post molds. The features here, however, are not as clustered when compared with those of Location 2. The overall orientation, both with respect to features and the dwelling itself, also parallels that of Location 2 but this structure is oriented in more of a north / northwest direction. The end wall openings also reflect this orientation. The structural difference here, however, entails an “offshoot” wall on the west side with an opening at the southwest end, and where the wall converges with the dwelling proper. If we take the dimensions of the structure, less the offshoot wall, we have an 11 m long by 6 m wide dwelling space. This creates more of an oblong than circular shape.

Like Location 2, there may have been two separate dwellings here (see Figures 7 and 9) however the feature distribution appears to indicate that more of the interior space was utilized. There may have been a smaller structure at one time, perhaps indicative of an initial dwelling. Post mold diameters average 8 cm while depths average 7 cm.

Feature Characteristics and Affiliation

The majority of the features identified at this location were devoid of or contained few artifacts (even fewer than those of Locations 1 and 2). They were shallow basins with four containing faunal fragments. Only one of these shallow features (Feature 13) was markedly different from the rest, containing a quantity of ceramic, faunal (including fish, deer, and turtle shell), and chipping detritus. This feature was composed of black topsoil fill with wood charcoal throughout and was only 5 to 7 cm in depth and 50 cm in diameter.

Most striking among the features in the structure, however, was Feature 12 (Figure 10). This feature comprised a combination hearth / refuse pit, with the latter representing the initial stage of its history and the hearth, I propose, was representative of a very specialized function: that of a sweat. The large hearth, which upon excavation proved to be of considerable depth (20+ cm), capped the feature proper, which extended to some 80 cm. This feature contained an abundance of artifacts and materials, much like Feature 13, but far more numerous in extent. Also of note is a pocket of fired soil in Feature 3, perhaps “detritus” from Feature 12. Lithic material was notably sparser. Fire-cracked rock, however, was in abundance on the surface, and particularly so in and around Feature 12, supporting a sweat lodge function.

Again, like Location 2, but even more so in the case of the artifact-bearing features, the features are oriented to the periphery of the dwelling space and in proximity to openings in the wall. Of these, Features 12 and 13 deserve greater scrutiny. Some 11 vessels are represented from Feature 12 (see Figure 11), with at least four rimsherd fragments of miniature vessels and also two short pipe stem sections, one of which is decorated with small punctations (Figure 12). Eight necksherd sections are included in the assemblage and a total of 121 analyzable bodysherds was excavated from the feature. Of these, 56 are slip-roughened, 43 are ribbed-paddled, 16 are (finely) cord-marked and 7 are plain. Taken together, the ceramic characteristics point to a Springwells phase occupation. What is particularly intriguing are not so much the rimsherd motifs as the combination of bodysherd treatments represented (see Figure 13).

The faunal assemblage of Feature 12 is likewise impressive and varied. Comprising the total are primarily deer elements (the majority are long bone sections, perhaps from two adults), followed by fish (the predominant species is drum), and large bird (goose / turkey). There is also a significant concentration of mollusc (mussel) shell (see Figure 12). But the most striking faunal species is turtle, represented by two carapaces, both approximately the same size. One of these was placed on top of the feature prior to or at the initiation of the hearth. The other carapace was located at a greater depth within a matrix of bone and ceramic as described. The species has been identified as Northern Map turtle (*M. Fletcher*, personal communication). Apart from the presence of ash pockets, there was no obvious soil stratification present in the feature. Bone tools are also present in the form of four awls (see Figure 12) while 3 antler bead preforms were also found. Approximately 5 percent of the assemblage (deer) has been burnt / calcined.

Lithic representation in Feature 12 is sparse; only several pieces of chipping detritus made on Kettle Point chert and one biface fragment were recovered. There are several examples of rough / ground stone, including a chalky limestone similar to the material from Location 1 and a grooved section of a basalt-like substance.



Figure 11: Location 3 Feature 12 Rimsherds.

Feature 13, on the other hand, could perhaps be seen as a reduced version of Feature 12. Noticeably absent, however, are ceramics with no rimsherds and only one necksherd in evidence, which may be from a small, slip roughened vessel. All 6 bodysherds and perhaps a basal sherd are smoothed over. The faunal assemblage comprises the bulk of the tally. Again, the most striking specimen is a turtle carapace deposited on top of the feature. The species in this case is Eastern Painted turtle (M. Fletcher, personal communication). The selection of different species of turtle to be deposited in features situated at opposite ends of the dwelling may be significant. Fish is prominent in the form of scales, particularly catfish, pickerel or perch, and drum. Deer remains are represented to a lesser degree and again are comprised mainly of long bone sections.

A small number, not more than several fragments, are calcined. There is also a large section of antler represented and 3 mussel shell fragments. Large bird (again, likely turkey or goose) is a minority species.



Figure 12: Assorted items from Location 3 Feature 12. Top row: miniature vessels and pipe stem. Middle row: bone awl. Bottom row: mollusc (mussel) shell

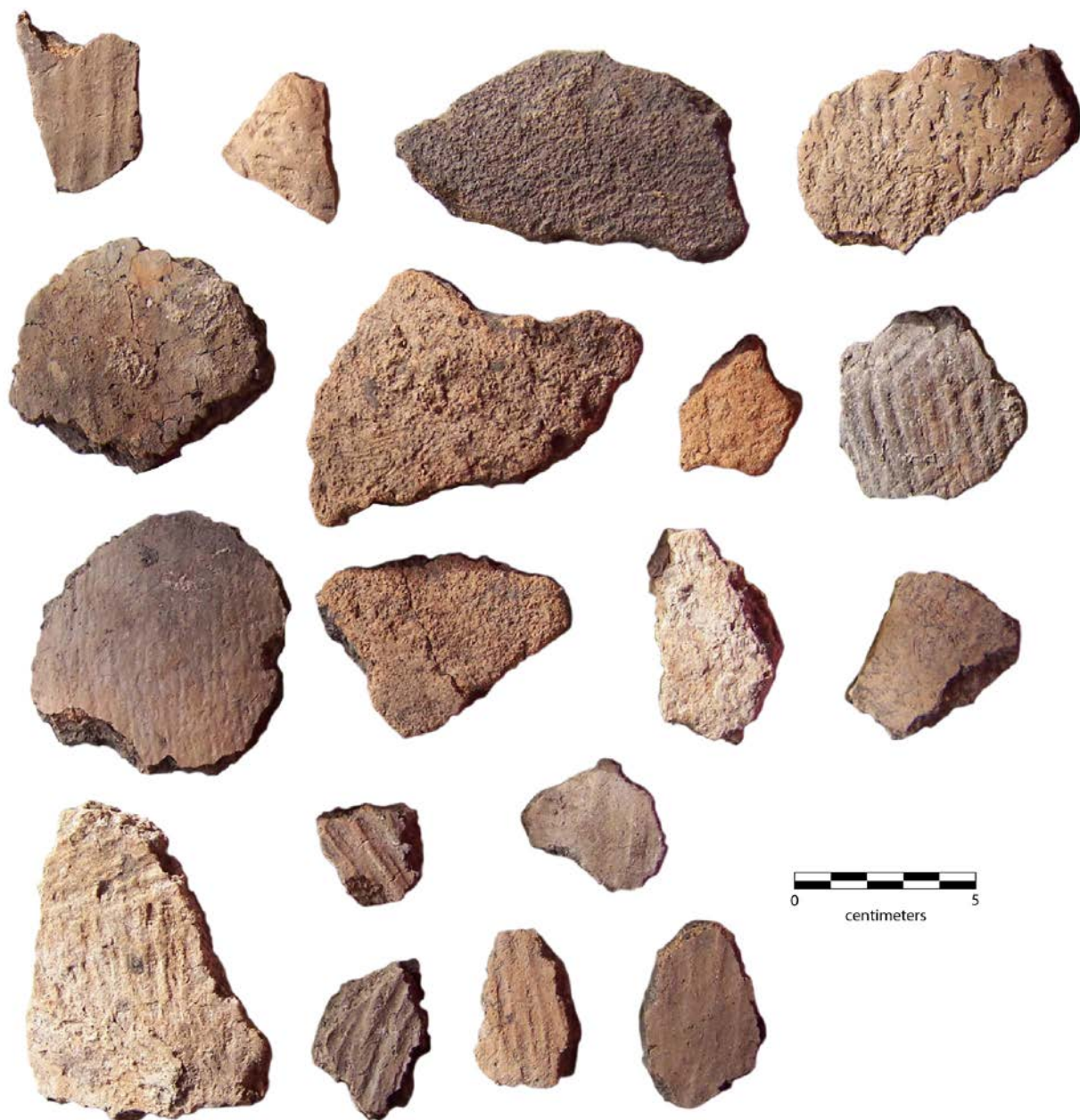


Figure 13: Location 3 Feature 12 Bodysherds.

The Feature 13 lithic assemblage is again sparse, represented only by the base of a small projectile point and 3 pieces of Kettle Point chipping detritus. Site wide, the average feature depth was 7 cm (excluding Feature 12) while the average feature diameter was 60 cm.

Discussion: Location 3

The nature of this settlement, while in some respects similar to that of Location 2, is unique in its dwelling morphology and feature contents (i.e., with respect Features 12 and 13). The additional presence of the wall and feature of a possible smaller circular structure, like the one at Location

2, is not out of the question. In Figure 7, the two possible structures are separated alongside those of Location 2 in order to illustrate their resemblance.

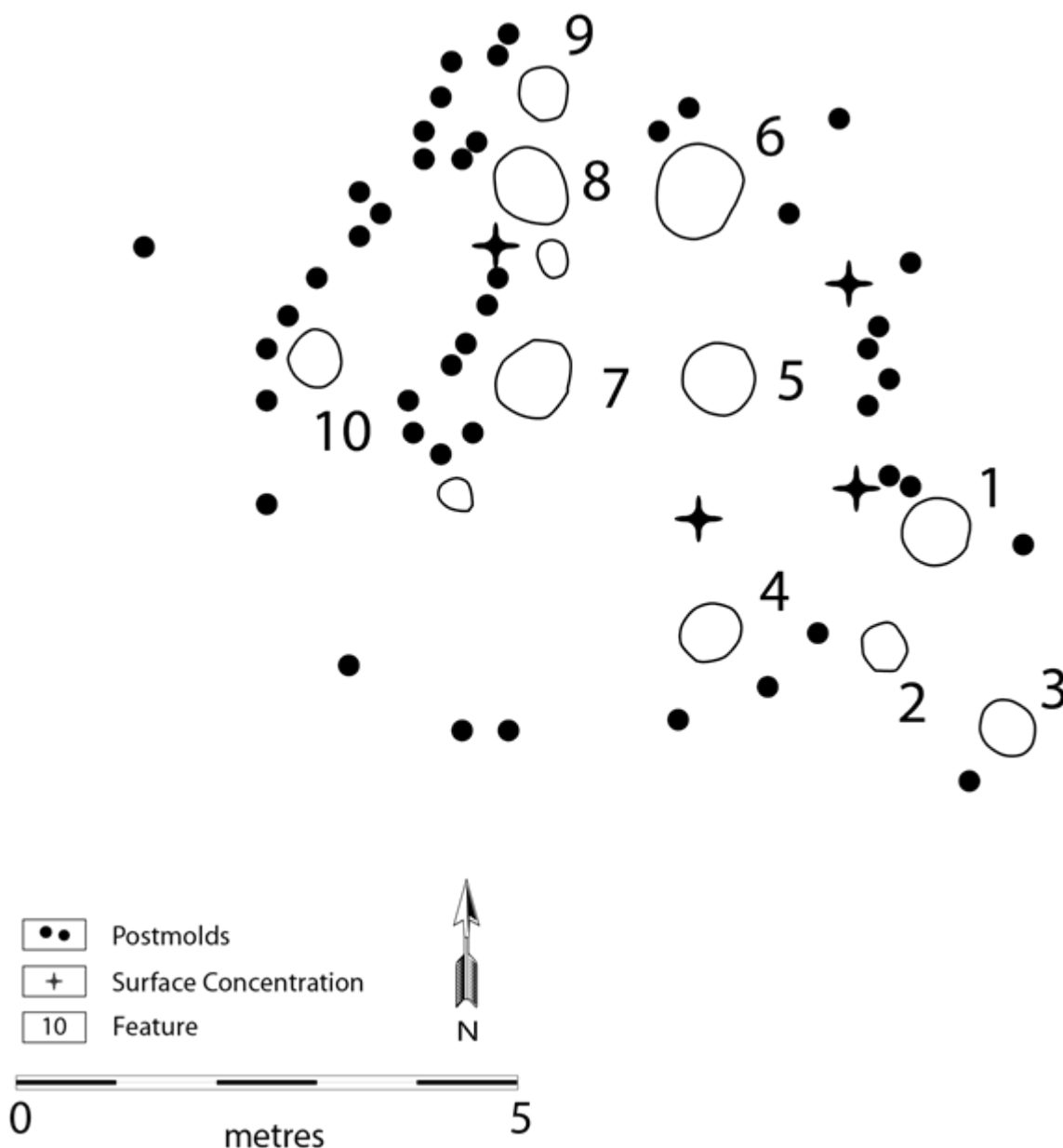


Figure 14: Location 4 Settlement Pattern.

The hearth itself, in proximity to the west wall and straddling two possible openings, along with the abundance of fire-cracked rock, suggests the Location 3 structure functioned as a sweat lodge. This is not to say, however, that the structure did not also serve as a dwelling during its history; indeed, this may have been the initial function of the space, but likely only for a short period prior to its alteration into a sweat lodge. Feature 12 indicates long term, continual usage as revealed by the depth of the hearth area and the depth, deposition, and contents beneath the hearth itself. This latter pit appears to have been a multi-seasonal affair (judging from the varied

faunal remains), even if only a one year event. The fact that there is no other evidence of long-term, repeated use other than Feature 12, coupled with the nature of its contents, and the extent of the hearth itself, is compelling. A plausible explanation for this multi-use feature is as the focal point for a seasonal harvest and feast followed by its repeated use as a sweat lodge. The fact that the structure is not circular may relate to its initial (intended) function as a dwelling.

Location 4

Introduction

This structure, roughly 5 metres in diameter, is made up of a single wall of well-spaced post molds encircling a cluster of 10 features. Unlike the other locations, the post molds of this dwelling occur less frequently on the west and south sides of the structure. Three of the features (1, 2, and 3) are situated outside of the structure proper at the southeast corner (Figure 14).

Like the other locations (i.e., the proposed structures A and B of Locations 2 and 3), this dwelling displays similar properties, orientation, and feature density. It bears the greatest resemblance, however, to that of the proposed Structure B at Location 3, particularly in terms of post patterning. I regard structure B at Location 3 as a dubious entity, primarily due to the lack of north end post molds, but also because of the “offshoot” wall, which I attribute to the function of the sweat lodge. Its uncanny resemblance to the Location 4 structure, however, is perhaps suggestive of its plausibility (see Figure 7). Unusual within the Location 4 structure is a line of posts bearing a striking resemblance to the “offshoot” wall of Location 3. Once again, orientation of the structure is along the north axis (considering the feature and internal wall positioning) while the average post mold diameter is 7 cm and average depth is 6 cm.

Feature Characteristics and Affiliation

All features were once again shallow, and particularly at this location, smaller in diameter than those of the other locations. As well, few artifacts were present. The most productive feature was Feature 1, which is situated just outside the structure where a possible wall opening is found. This opening coincides with similarly placed openings in structure B at both Locations 2 and 3.

Feature 1 contained one necksherd fragment with a plain / wiped surface treatment and several bodysherds, all with ribbed-paddle treatment (see Figure 15 top row) and associated with the Springwells phase. This is also the only feature which contained faunal material although several fragments of deer long bones were the only elements found, one of which was burnt. Only three other features contained artifacts: Feature 5 produced several pieces of Kettle Point chipping detritus, Feature 6 contained one slip-roughened bodysherd (Figure 15 bottom row), two exfoliated bodysherds, and one fragment of chipping detritus, while Feature 7 contained two pieces of chipping detritus (including one utilized flake) and one exfoliated bodysherd. No fired soil was detected and thus it does not appear the structure was used in the cold weather despite its resemblance to the winter cabin from the Springwells phase Sherman site in nearby Kent County, Ontario (see Murphy 1991). Feature alignment, meanwhile, is similar to that of structure

B at Location 2. Average feature diameter is 36 cm with an average depth of 12 cm. Features devoid of contents include numbers 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 10.



Figure 15: Location 4 Necksherds and Bodysherds.

Discussion: Location 4

In terms of dimensions and number of features, the Location 4 dwelling is readily comparable to structure B of both Locations 2 and 3 (if, in fact, Location 3 contains a second structure). It also compares favourably to these structures with regard to orientation and possible openings / doorways. Particularly striking between the three locations is the patterning of postmolds at the southeast corner, where in all cases there appears to have been an elaborate entrance / exit with several posts branching off the main wall and forming a possible “porchway”. In Location 4, this porch is combined with two features (1 and 2) while this also appears to be the case with the entrance / exit on the west side of structure B at Location 2 (Features 15, 16). Meanwhile, Feature 11 appears to be implicated in the southeast doorway opening on Location 3. All of these locations are very “porous” (i.e., there is an absence of or widely-spaced postmolds) on the north ends of the structures, while this is also true for the south end of the Location 4 structure (see Figure 14). Finally, the similarity of the internal partition-like wall of postmolds at Location 4 with the “offshoot” wall of Location 3 has already been noted, as has the overall feature patterning between structure B of Location 2 and Location 4. If the B structures at Locations 2 and 3 were of a temporary nature, however, the Location 4 structure appears to have been even more so. Whereas there was at least one feature in the other locations with a sizeable artifact count, there was a definite absence of this at Location 4.

CONCLUSIONS

The subtle ridge adjacent to Marshy Creek has provided us with a series of Younger through Springwells phase seasonal occupations visited perhaps only repeatedly in one or two cases by small groups of travellers along the St. Clair River corridor. The unique nature of these dwelling places is I believe a reflection of the river as both a conduit and a border, and the concomitant territorial margins of eastwardly influenced and westwardly influenced Late Woodland populations, whether these were substantially “Iroquoian” or “(Central) Algonquian” respectively. The likelihood of shared spaces occurs along the often very fluid zones of common navigation, and it is this sense of transitional territory and shared boundary which may come to the forefront in dwelling type, feature type and contents, and procurement and deposition practices.

Regarding Location 1, there is a pattern of overlapping features with ceramics characteristic of a late Younger / early Springwells occupation. As well, we see a carryover in ceramic design and dwelling morphology from Location 2 to Location 3, and a similar carryover from Location 3 to Location 4, the latter representing perhaps the final dwelling of the group(s) emerging from Location 2 and / or 3. It is perhaps not surprising that in this context of transition and boundary, the Location 3 structure, as a proposed sweat lodge, was apparently the one with the greatest permanence (i.e., given the depth of fired soil and the depth / contents of Feature 12). Yet the placement of such a feature defies logic in terms of its proximity to the structure wall posts. It remains an anomaly in both location and type.

I believe that one of the indices of continuity (and possibly ethnic identity) in this region is ceramic bodysherd treatment as I proposed for certain Late Woodland settlements on the Sydenham (see Riddell 2006). Here I am referring in particular to the even split of ribbed-paddle and slip-roughened surface treatments, combined with a minority ratio of cord roughened / marked treatments contained within the same context in Feature 12 at Location 3. Coupled with the deposition of symbolically charged artifacts (e.g., the pictograph stone and turtle carapaces) and the proposed specialized use of certain features (e.g., the sweat lodge from Location 3), we have a unique glimpse into small-scale Late Woodland life in the region.

A next step in furthering these interpretations, including the obvious need for increased documentation of Late Woodland settlements in this region of southwestern Ontario, would be to compare examples in the ethnographic and ethnoarchaeological literature that approximate the situations of the settlements discussed. While obviously outside the scope of this paper, perhaps such studies will provide the fodder for future research into this still little known region of the Late Woodland period in Ontario.

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Endnotes

¹: I realize this is stretching the limits of interpretation, however it is an option that I believe should not be overlooked. If not an actual "underwater panther", the rock figure is at least likely a depiction of a snake or serpent, as outlined by Rajnovich (1994:46, 98, 107, 108; see also Fox

2004). I refer primarily to the bottom set of squiggly lines, as depicted in Figure 8, and where the head would be (where the lines converge to form a triangle, a black dot marking the spot). According to Rajnovich (1994), the snake is designated as the enemy of the thunderbird, providing the tension / balance between the underworld and upper world respectively. As well, the snake is associated with thunder / lightning and is implicated in the medicine lodge (Rajnovich 1994). It should also be noted that while there is a basic “template” for the mythic origin figures found in pictographs, these figures do display some variation, such that it is ultimately the artist’s conception.

Salvaging the Ivory Hill Cache Or “You Can’t Always Get What You Want, but.....”

By William A. Fox

I report here on a site investigated over 30 years ago. The site was brought to the writer’s attention by Brian Deller, then of Mount Brydges, who reported that ovate bifaces of Onondaga chert had been recovered by a public school student from a small sand knoll northwest of town. During a field trip to the site with Brian on May 9, 1983, it was decided that a salvage excavation was warranted; and subsequently, five days (May 10-14) were spent with a crew of between three and five people in exposing and recording 40 square meters of the knoll (see Figure 1; Fox 1983b:10).



Figure 1: Excavations at Ivory Hill Site, 1983. Malcolm Horne, Brian Deller, and Peter Maclean.

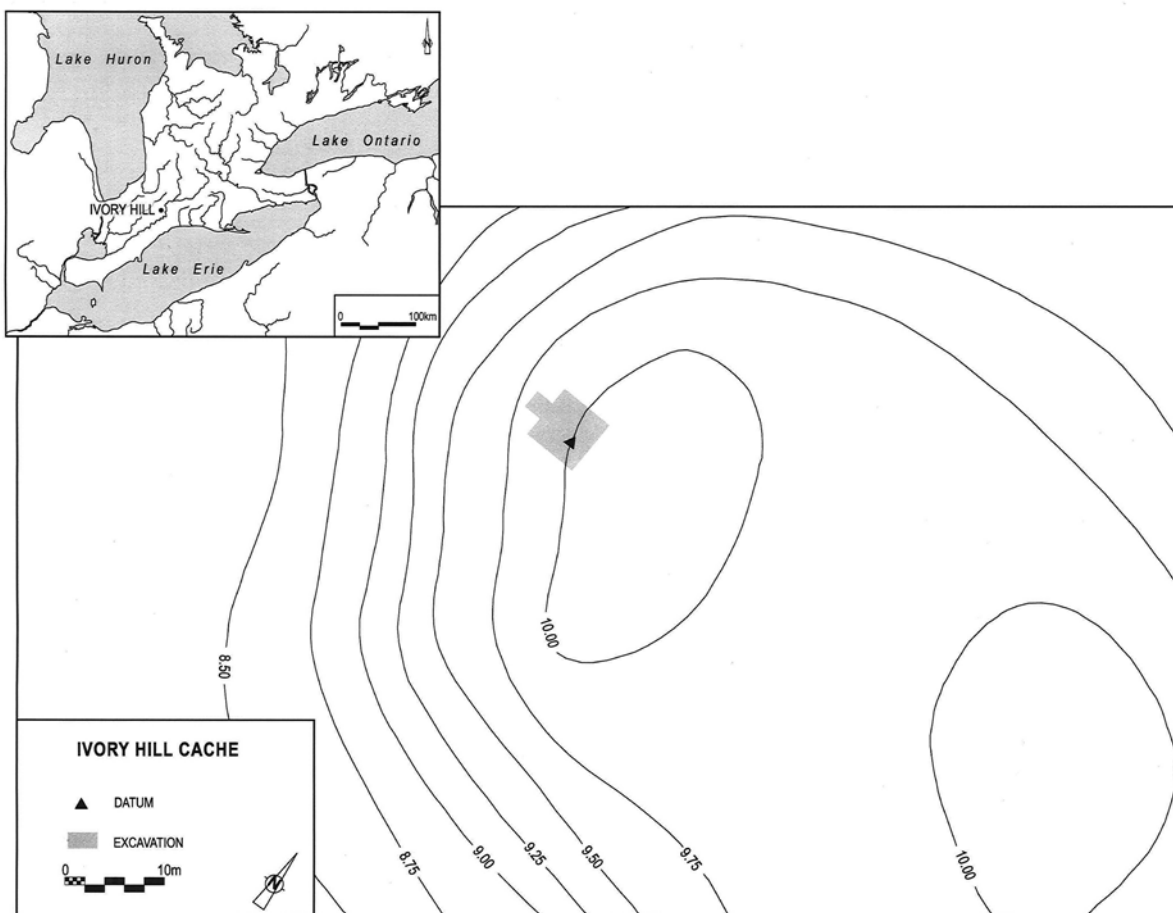


Figure 2: Contour Map of Ivory Hill Site Showing Location of 1983 Excavations.

FIELDWORK

Initial surface survey of the knoll and environs had produced some fire-cracked rock, a thin scatter of chert debitage and one ovate biface. On the basis of the latter, a two-metre square grid comprising 10 units was laid out and a contour survey of the knoll accomplished (see Figure 2). The light sand plough zone was then removed by shovel and 6 mm screened for artefact recovery. Of twenty-one chert bifaces and fragments obtained from the plough zone, all were manufactured of Onondaga chert, and none could be associated with a subsoil feature. Plough scars in the subsoil indicated a northeast/southwest alignment, and the distribution of recovered bifaces measured 7 metres (northeast/southwest) by 5 metres (northwest/southeast). Three large natural features (tree-related) were recorded, along with a dozen post-like circular stains; none of which appeared to be cultural. One of the former (Feature 1) included 40 pieces of fire-cracked rock (FCR), five chert flakes, and some carbonized wood, but had been impacted by a rodent burrow. It likely represented a tree throw with midden debris infilling. Two cultural features were exposed and are described below. Surface collection of the field adjacent to the knoll produced several diagnostic Late Archaic and Middle Woodland bifaces.

CULTURAL FEATURES

Two roughly circular, multi-layered pits were exposed adjacent one another in Units 9 and 10 (Figure 3). Feature 2 measured 78 cm (N-S) by 100 cm (E-W), and was cylindrical in form, extending 39 cm below the plough zone. Slightly smaller, Feature 3 measured 65 cm (N-S) by 61.5 cm (E-W), and was cylindrical in form, extending 56 cm into the subsoil (Figure 4).

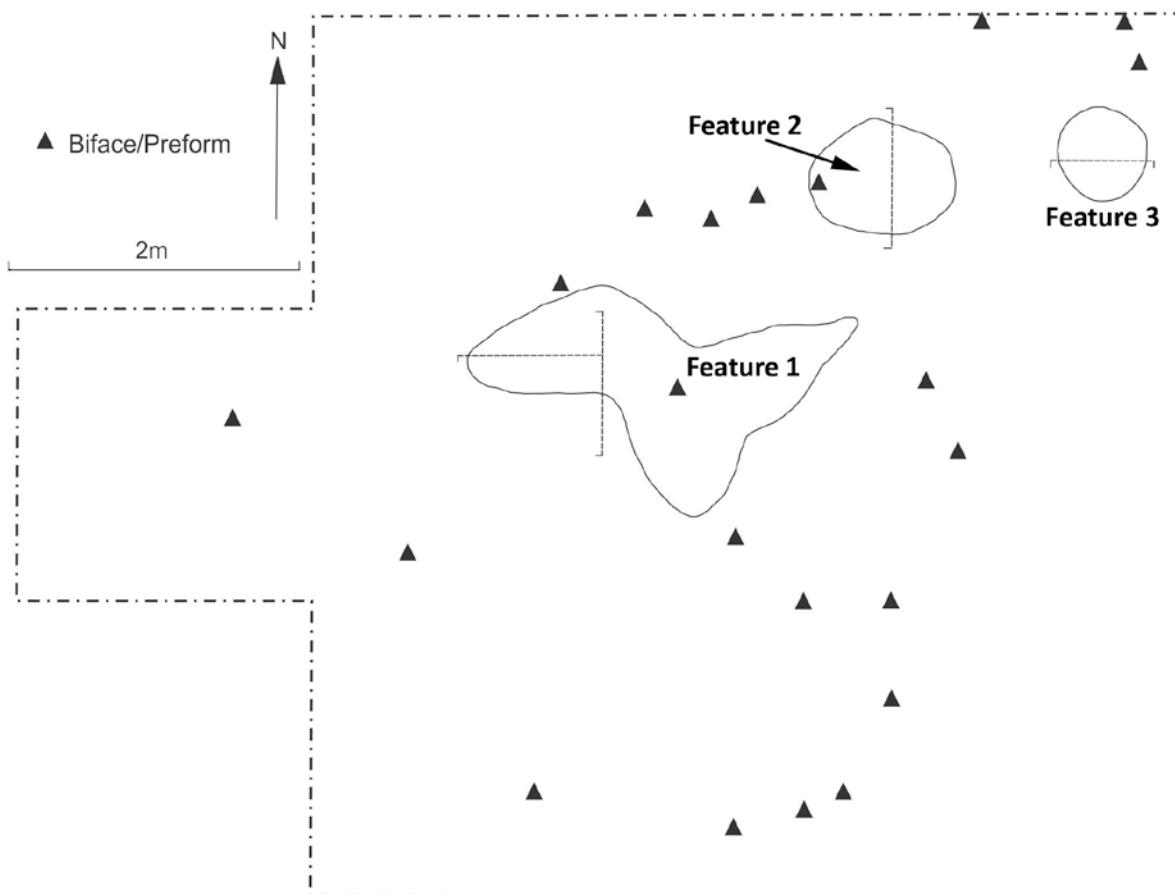


Figure 3: Location of Features and Bifaces in Excavated Area. Dashed lines on features show location of profile views

ARTIFACTS

Lithics

Biface Projectile Points or Knives

Three chert bifaces were collected from the field surface as noted above; as well as, two chert biface tips. Three of these artifacts are manufactured of Onondaga chert, while two bifaces are of Kettle Point chert. One side/corner-notched Kettle Point chert biface has convex lateral edges and an irregular convex base; measuring 27 mm, 17 mm, and 5 mm in length, width and thickness, respectively (Figure 5a). The two notches are 4 mm by 3 mm, and 4.5 mm by 2 mm in breadth and depth, while the inter-notch width is 12.5 mm. A second Kettle Point chert side-

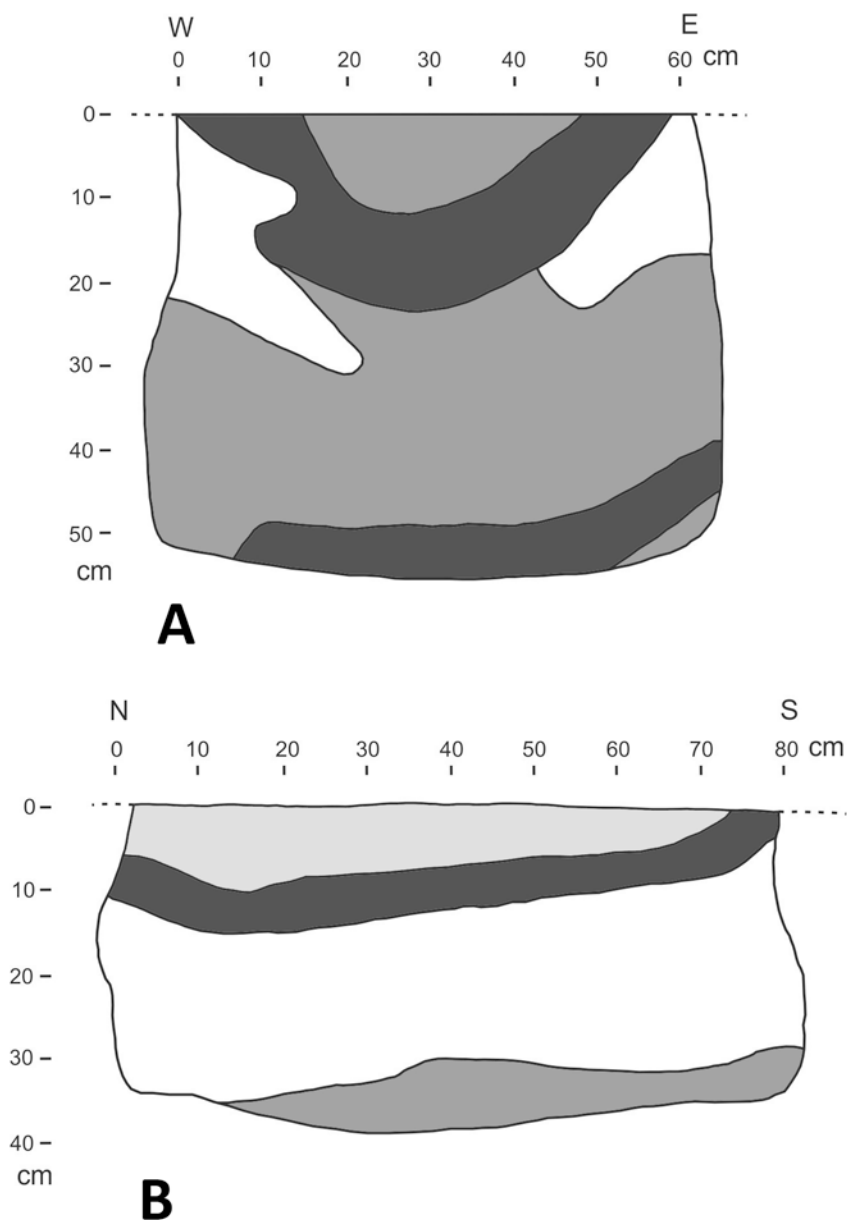


Figure 4: Profiles of Feature 3 (A) and Feature 2 (B).

notched biface also displays convex lateral edges and base, and measures 39 mm, 24 mm, and 6 mm in length, width and thickness (Figure 5c). Notches are 7 mm by 3 mm, and 11 mm by 4 mm in breadth and depth, and the inter-notch width is 16 mm. The Onondaga chert biface is stemmed, with a convex lateral and basal edge configuration (Figure 5d); being 47 mm, 25 mm, and 9 mm in length, width and thickness, respectively.

A corner-notched biface of what appears to be Bois Blanc Formation chert was recovered from the plough zone of Unit 1 (Figure 5b). It measures 44 mm by 22 mm by 8 mm in length, width and thickness, respectively; while the inter-notch width is 11.5 mm. The one measurable notch is 7 mm in breadth and 3.5 mm in depth. Coarse serrations along both lateral edges appear to have been purposely produced.

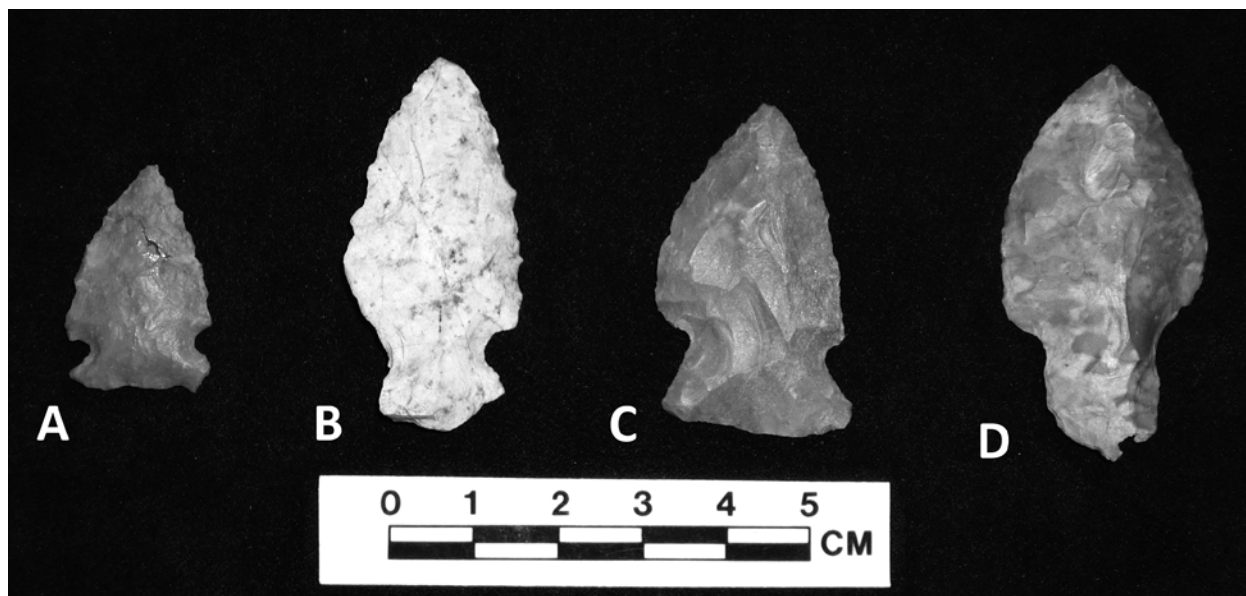


Figure 5: Chert Bifaces from Field Surface.

Biface Preforms

Thirteen complete, three tip and four basal fragments of Onondaga chert ovate bifaces; as well as an Onondaga chert ovate uniface were recovered from plough zone excavations (see Figure 6). Metrics for these, plus the eleven bifaces surface collected previously by Brian Deller, are presented in Table 1. One of Brian's specimens is not Onondaga chert, but appears to have been manufactured from a grey variant of Vanport (Flint Ridge) chert from central Ohio.

Utilized Flakes

Two edge retouched Onondaga chert flake fragments were screened from the plough zone; one in Unit 1 and the second from Unit 7. The former displays bilateral continuous dorsal edge retouch along one concave and the opposite concave/convex edge, and may have functioned as a spokeshave. It measures 27 mm in length, 16 mm in width, and 3 mm in thickness. The latter is a biface thinning flake, oval in plane view, and displaying discontinuous ventral and dorsal edge retouch. It measures 23 mm by 17 mm by 3 mm in length, width and thickness.

Debitage

The range and abundance of raw materials represented includes the following cherts: Onondaga (45), Kettle Point (25), Selkirk (3), Bois Blanc Fm? (3), Haldimand (2), and Unidentified/burnt (12). In addition, there are 14 fragments of sandstone, five flakes of "greywacke" and one quartzite flake.

Miscellaneous

A fragment of mudstone from Unit 3 and a fragment of red slate from Unit 9 display ground facets.

Table 1: Data on Ivory Hill Bifaces.

Catalogue Number	Length	Width	Thickness	Raw Material
1	56	35	12	Onondaga chert
2	57	28	7	Onondaga chert
3	61	47	11	Onondaga chert
4	52	33	7	Onondaga chert
5	67	36	7	Onondaga chert
6, 21	65	31	8	Onondaga chert
7	70	39	9	Onondaga chert
8	67	29	8	Onondaga chert
9	34+	35	9	Onondaga chert
10	23+	38+	8	Onondaga chert
11	54	36	7	Onondaga chert
12	58	35	7	Onondaga chert
13, 20	57	35	8	Onondaga chert
14	71	38	11	Onondaga chert
15	61	37	10	Onondaga chert
16	62	27	10	Onondaga chert
17	47	27	7	Onondaga chert
18	57+	34+	11	Onondaga chert
19	87	36	10	Onondaga chert
22	67	36	13	Onondaga chert
23	54	38	8	Onondaga chert
24	68	43	12	Onondaga chert
25	72	39	10	Vanport chert
26	62	33	8	Onondaga chert
27	53	34	8	Onondaga chert
28	77	44	12	Onondaga chert
29	60	31	10	Onondaga chert
30	54	31	7	Onondaga chert
31	59	33	8	Onondaga chert
32	70	35	9	Onondaga chert
33	49	36	11	Onondaga chert
34	62	34	8	Onondaga chert
35	78	38	12	Onondaga chert



Figure 6: Biface Preforms.

Fire-Cracked Rock

A total of 6.159 kilograms, comprising 255 fragments were recovered from plough zone screening of the ten units and the fills of three features.

Ceramics

Two tiny split neck(?) sherds were discovered in the plough zone of Units 2 and 7. Their maximum dimensions are 10 and 21 mm. These red-brown smoothed-over-cord sherds mend to form a single specimen, which appears to display a segment of a drilled mend hole (Figure 7).

Ecofacts

Carbonized wood was recovered from plough zone screening of Units 1, 2 and 8, and flotation of fills from Features 1, 2 and 3. A double bucket flotation technique was used to process 117 litres of fill from Feature 1, 22 litres from Feature 2, and 93.5 litres from Feature 3. While the latter feature produced no artifacts, a charcoal sample from the basal layer of this small storage pit

which also contained carbonized corn kernels produced a radiocarbon date of 790 \pm 80 or 1160 \pm 80 A.D., uncorrected (I - 13,164) (Fox 1983a:3). The dominant wood species are beech and ash, with minor amounts of maple, willow and ironwood (Fecteau 2012). Carbonized nut shell fragments were recovered from the plough zone of Unit 6 and the fill of a 13 cm diameter natural feature immediately northwest of Feature 2 in Unit 9. All identifiable nut shell is butternut (*Juglans cf. cinerea*).

The only faunal remains consist of a cow incisor from the plough zone of Unit 6, which was identified by Frances Stewart (Personal communication: October 22, 2011).



Figure 7: Smoothed over Cord Ceramic Sherd.

DISCUSSION

Numerous habitation sites ranging in age from Palaeo-Indian to Middle Woodland have been documented across the rolling sandy landscape in the immediate vicinity of “Ivory Hill” (Jim McLeod, pers. comm. November 12, 2010) (see Figure 8). In fact, a Middle Woodland component was excavated in an adjacent field by a University of Western Ontario crew directed by Dr. Chris Ellis in 1992 (Ellis and Wilson 1993:71). Consequently, the Terminal Archaic and Middle Woodland diagnostic bifaces illustrated in Figure 5 came as no surprise. What did come as a surprise was the recovery of two early Late Woodland ceramic sherds and a consistent

radiocarbon date from a small storage pit on the site. This component was essentially “invisible”, prior to the excavation.



Figure 8: Jim McLeod Displaying Similar Biface Preforms.

The Ivory Hill site excavation was organized in an attempt to obtain contextual data, and perhaps a C14 date, relating to an Onondaga chert biface cache assumed to be of Middle Woodland provenience and similar in form to other caches from southwestern Ontario (Fox 1984:11), such as the one excavated on the Donaldson site (Finlayson 1977:257-8, 390-95, Plates 17 and 35). Adding further to the interest of this assemblage was a Vanport chert biface, consistent in form,

but not of the classic “light blue-grey” colour (Mills 1921:193) of bifaces documented from Robbins blade caches to the west (Fox and Williamson 1989:11; Fox 2010: 9-10, Figures 8 & 9). Figure 9 displays the size and shape of 30 of the biface cache preforms, based on the maximum length and width of individual specimens. As can be seen the Vanport chert biface fits comfortably within the predominately Onondaga chert distribution. Likewise, taken as a whole with dimension means, the Caradoc Twonship cache clusters with two other predominately Onondaga chert Middle Woodland (Saugeen) caches (Donaldson and Robson), as opposed to the Vanport chert Middle Woodland (Robbins) caches (High Banks, Shebahoaning and Tinline) and three Onondaga chert, typically narrower Early Woodland (Meadowood) caches (Thedford, Hoover and Moerschfelder) (Fox 1984) (Figure 10). The similar mean length of the Onondaga chert Early and Middle Woodland forms may be due to bed thickness constraints, with Onondaga chert beds reaching only 13 cm in thickness (Fox 2009:362), as opposed to the Vanport chert bifaces derived from quality beds up to 183 cm in thickness (Mills 1921:199). Both the Saugeen Middle Woodland biface preforms and Robbins blades are of a similarly wide form, unlike the narrower Meadowood blades. The Meadowood and Robbins bifaces display more regular, controlled flaking patterns than the Saugeen specimens; as reflected in mean thicknesses ranging 4.9–5.8 mm, 7.6–8.2 mm, and 9.2–11.7 mm, respectively. Among the Saugeen caches, Ivory Hill had the thinnest average at 9.2 mm; while the single Vanport chert blade in the cache measured 10 mm in thickness.

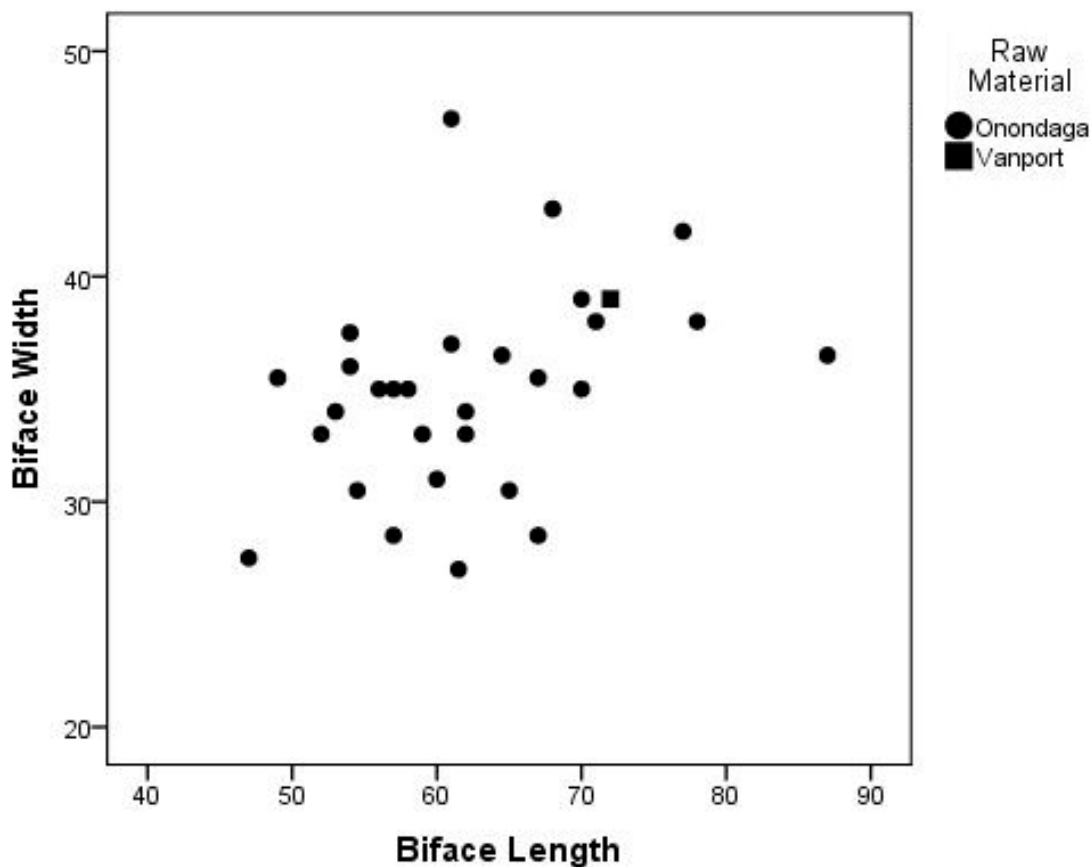


Figure 9: Plot of Biface Width by Length for Ivory Hill Assemblage.

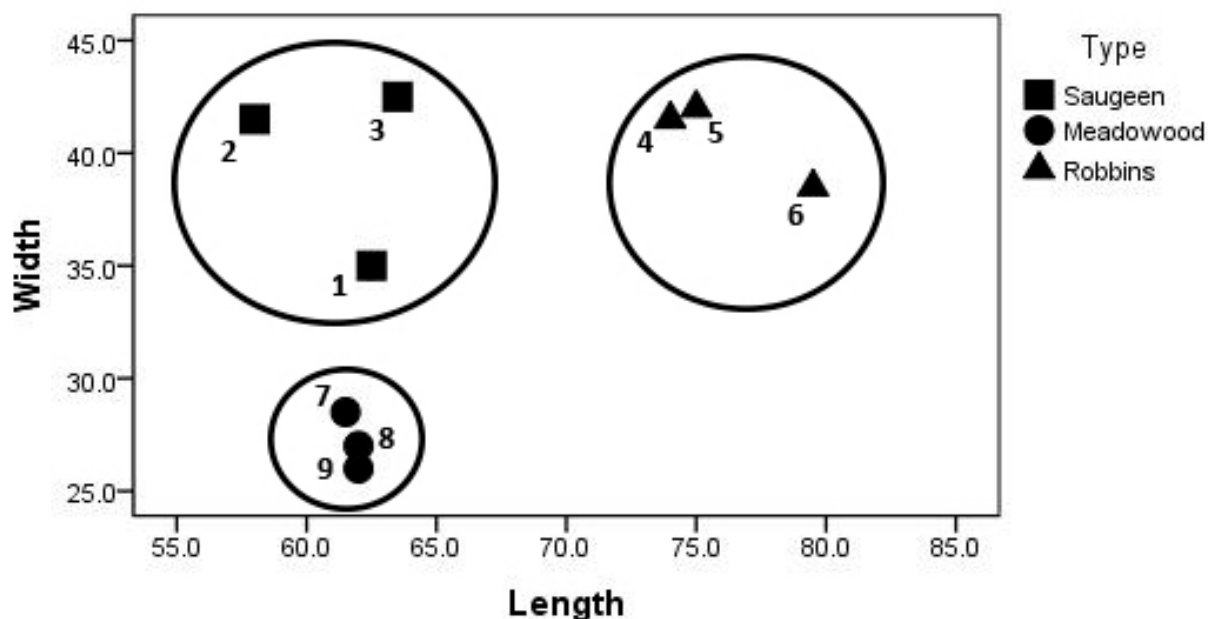


Figure 10: Plot of Mean Biface Width by Length for Various Early to Middle Woodland Assemblages. 1: Ivory Hill; 2: Donaldson; 3: Robson; 4: Shebahoning; 5: High Banks; 6: Tinline; 7: Thedford; 8: Hoover; 9: Moerschfelder.

What we appear to be observing is an Ontario Middle Woodland biface industry manufactured on Onondaga chert, that is imitating the form of imported Vanport chert Robbins blades. This industry reflects a lesser concern for control in production than that evidenced in the earlier locally produced Meadowood blades, which were being distributed throughout the Northeast during the last period of lithic commodity export from southern Ontario until the turn of the seventeenth century.

Stepping back to view the results of the Ivory Hill site excavations as a whole, the most important contextual information produced relates to the “invisibility” of the Glen Meyer occupation at the site. A surface collection could easily have missed the two miniscule ceramic sherds, and no diagnostic Late Woodland lithic artifacts were in evidence. In fact, none of the pit features produced diagnostic artifacts. Only a C14 date from a pit producing some carbonized corn confirmed the latest Native occupation of the site, which was so ephemeral that no other structural evidence such as post holes was present, similar to the Caradoc sand plain Glen Meyer Melbourne 2 and Caradoc 12 sites reported by Ron Williamson in his doctoral dissertation (Williamson 1985:170). Other Glen Meyer sites producing a single ceramic sherd include Caradoc 1, 2, 3, 14, and Komoka 4; while three other sites reported by Brian Deller to have produced ceramics (Caradoc 6 and 7 and Komoka 5), produced none during Williamson’s survey (Williamson 1985:171-172).

The corn and, perhaps associated nut shell, suggests Fall activities on site, but little more can be deduced concerning this occupation. Its situation in a historically documented oak stand (Finlay 1977) may reflect some hunting activity, similar to the Crowfield Glen Meyer component 3 kilometers to the south (Williamson 1985:263). If so, the lack of Glen Meyer projectile points

and animal bone from Ivory Hill suggests very limited hunting activity and perhaps more floral resource exploitation. Such sites, characterized by “limited surface remains” (Williamson 1985:263) challenge the ability of researchers to reconstruct comprehensive regional settlement system reconstructions, even for the Late Woodland period, on the basis of surface surveys.

CONCLUSIONS

The initial objective for the Ivory Hill site excavation project was not met. None of the biface preforms were recovered from an undisturbed and datable context. Their form and technological attributes strongly suggest a Middle Woodland provenience, however. What was revealed was the ephemeral nature of one component of the Caradoc Sand Plain Glen Meyer settlement system, which stands as a cautionary note regarding our ability to fully understand and reconstruct past lifeways on the basis of traditional investigative strategies.

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